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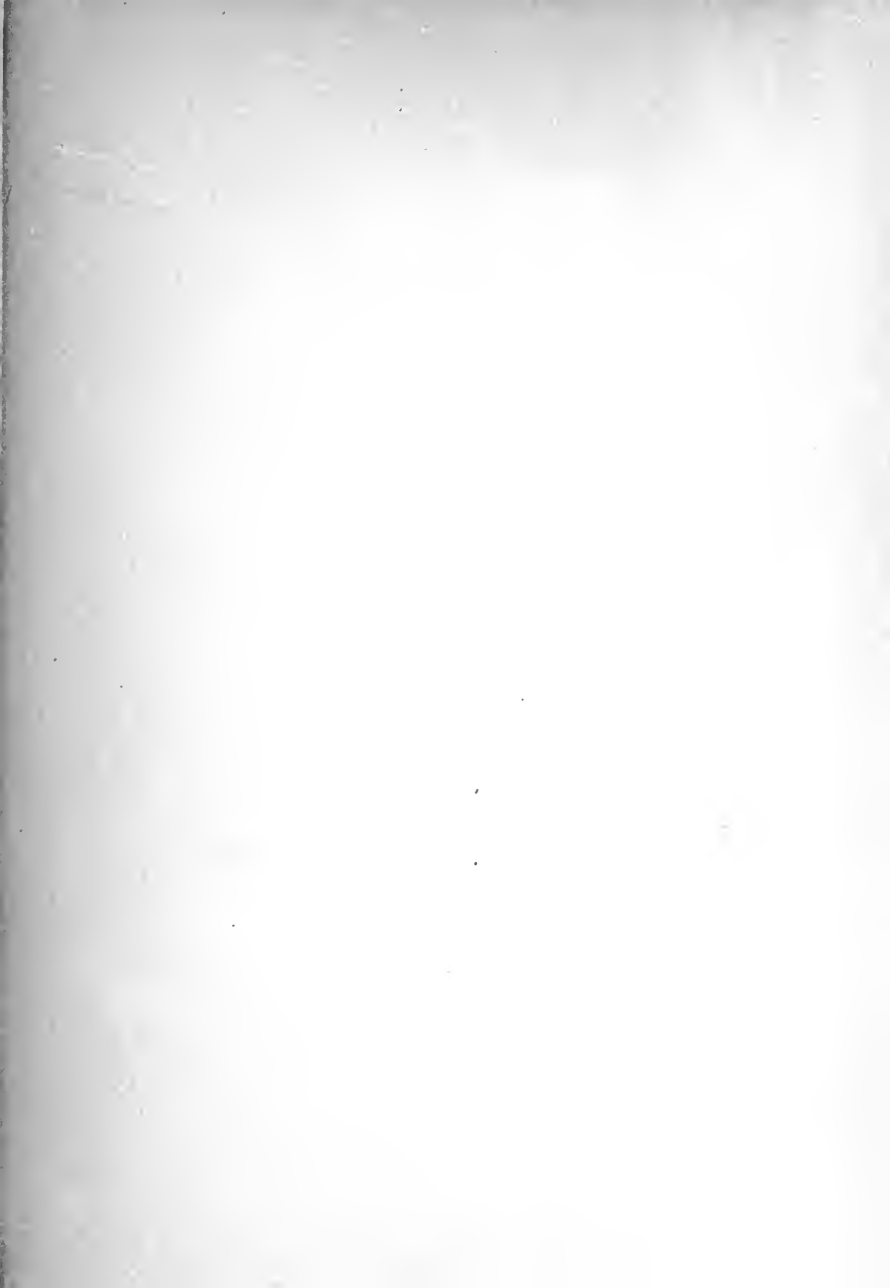


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# THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT



# THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

A Masque-Drama  
In Five Acts and a Prelude

By  
WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY



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M C M

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# P R E L U D E

---

*The action falls immediately before the Incarnation*

---

*Persons of the Prelude*

---

RAPHAEL

URIEL

THE ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE

A SHEPHERD

A SHEPHERD BOY

A YOUNG MAN (*persona muta*)

A GIRL



## SCENE I.

*A meadow and coppice near the sea ; beyond low hills the roofs of a town. Dawn.*

---

*Raphael.*

Another night like this would change my blood  
To human: the soft tumult of the sea  
Under the moon, the panting of the stars,  
The notes of querulous love from pool and clod,  
In earth and air the dreamy under-hum  
Of hived hearts swarming,—such another night  
Would quite unsphere me from my angelhood!  
Thrice have I touched my lute's least human  
strings

And hushed their throbbing, hearing how they  
spake

Sheer earthly, they that once so heavenly sang  
Above the pure unclouded psalmody.

Sing as thou wilt, then, since thou needs must  
sing !

For ever song grows dearer as I walk  
These evenings of large sunset, these dumb noons  
Vastly suspended, these enormous nights  
Through which earth heaves her bulk toward  
the dawn.

With song I shelter me, who else were left

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Defenceless amid God's infinitudes,  
Bruised by the unshod trample of his hours.

*(He sings.)*

The late moon would not stay,  
The stars grow far and few ;  
Into her house of day  
Hung with Sidonian blue  
Stealeth the earth, as a mænad girl  
Steals to her home when the orgies are o'er  
That startled the glens and the sleeping shore,  
And up from the passionate deeps of night  
Into the shallows and straits of light  
Softly the forests whirl.  
Laugh, earth ! For thy feigning-face is wise ;  
There is naught so clear as thy morning eyes ;  
And the sun thy lord is an easy lord !  
What should they be to him,—  
Thine hours of dance in the woodland dim,  
The brandished torch and the shouted word,  
The flight, the struggle, the honeyed swoon  
Neath the wild, wild lips of the moon ?

Beyond the seaward screen of hazel boughs  
The waves flash argent 'neath the clambering  
light ;  
But wherefore do these wondrous colours run

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Out of the place of morning? The young leaves  
Are swept and winnowed upward as a flame,  
And in their whispering glories swiftly dawns  
A shape of lordly wings, each plume distinct  
With dyes auroral. Where, 'mid store of light,  
Most spiritual silver burns, a face comes through.  
My comrade Uriel cometh from the sun!

*Uriel* (appearing).

Why tarriest on thine errand, Raphael?

*Raphael.*

I do no errand here.

*Uriel.*

Why camest thou then?

*Raphael.*

Since earth is dear to me. Sometimes it seems —  
Treading the prairie's autumn sibilance,  
Or when the tongues of summer lightning speak  
In the corners of the cloud — I could forget  
My station 'mid the deathless hierarchies,  
And change into a clot of anxious clay.

*Uriel.*

Mock not, sweet brother! thou who knowest  
well —

Better than I or Michael or the rest —

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The throes that shake these clots of passionate  
clay;  
Knowest their lewd harsh blood, their shell of  
sense  
So frail, so piteously contrived for pain.

*Raphael.*

I dare to say how little jest it was.  
Oft, as I leave these sliding shafts of dark,  
And homeward climb the immaterial cliffs,  
My heart makes question which were worthier  
state  
For a free soul to choose,—angelic calm,  
Angelic vision, ebbless, increscent,  
Or earth-life with its reachings and recoils,  
Its lewd harsh blood so swift to change and flower  
At the least touch of love, its shell of sense  
So subtly made to minister them delight,  
So frail, so piteously contrived for pain.

*Uriel.*

Brother, thou dost not well to wander here.  
If thou wilt roam, choose some less troubled star.  
The roaring midst of the insatiate sun  
Where God has set my watch, is peace to this !  
Of all the bitter drops that dewed His brow  
In his old agony, this earth-drop fell

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Most bitter salt, and ever since hath been  
Fuller of travailling than other worlds.

*Raphael.*

Thy speech is dark. I understand it not.

*Uriel.*

Of a dark thing I speak a few dark words.  
Put from thy gaze the sweet bloom of these hills  
And all this gorgeous dapple of the sea,  
And let thy memory stand again with me  
On Time's untrodden threshold, that first day  
Which searched and stung our immemorial  
peace

With pangs of vernal influence. Heaven rose  
As if from sleep, and, lo ! through all the void  
Clambered and curled creation like a vine,  
Hanging the dark with clusters of young bloom.  
Then from the viewless ever-folded heart  
Of the mystic Rose, stole breath and pulse of  
change,

Delicious pantings such as seize the breast  
Of lovers when the love-tide nears its flood,  
Yet touched with endless potency of pain,  
As lips of mothers when their anguish ebbs  
And leaves the waifling life. Then first the  
Dove

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Began to mourn above the mercy-seat,  
And the dear sister spirits of the Lamps  
Bent all their shimmering wings one way to  
screen

Their wicks from the wind-flaw. Large with  
question turned

Angelic eyes to archangelic eyes,  
Archangels laid changed lips to the ears of  
Thrones,

Thrones gazed at Dominations, Powers made sign  
To Principalities ; but not one dared,  
Voicing the fear that filled him, to cry, "Lord,  
What hast Thou brought upon Thy kingdom,  
Thou

Ancient of Days !'' Their silence was right  
well.

*Raphael.*

All this the meditative spirits oft  
Have pondered. But thy meaning still is dark.

*Uriel.*

Ourselves who questioned why the world was  
made

Were born of the same questionable seed,  
And we who feared were the first cause of fear.  
Of a dark thing I speak a few dark words.  
Of old the mind of God, coiled on itself

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In contemplation single and eterne,  
Felt suddenly a stealing wistfulness  
Sully the essence of his old content  
With pangs of dim division. Long He strove  
Against his bosom's deep necessity,  
Then, groping for surcease, put forth the orbs  
Of Paradise, with all their imagery,  
And the ordered hierarchies where we stand ;  
Some sharing more in his essential calm,  
Some, rebel spirits, banished now or quelled,  
The ill-starred sons of his disquietude,—  
Disquietude not quenched when fell the pride  
Of Lucifer, long bastioned in the North.  
Demand of joy, hardly to be gainsaid,  
And vast necessity of grief, still worked  
Compulsive in his breast : our essence calm,  
Those lucid orbs accordant, could not bring  
Nepenthe long. His hand He still withheld  
Ages of ages, fearing the event,  
Till, bathed in brighter urge and wistfulness  
He put forth suddenly this vine of Time  
And hung the hollow dark with passionate  
change.

*Raphael.*

I think for me Heaven seemed not Heaven till  
then,  
When from our seats of peace we could behold

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The strife of ripening suns and withering moons,  
Marching of ice-floes, and the nameless wars  
Of monster races laboring to be man ;  
When we could hear the wrestle of hoarse sound  
Hurl gust on gust obscurely toward the time  
Of disinvolved music : till at last,  
Standing erect amid the giant fern —

*Uriel.*

At last ! At last ! O shaken Breast, nowhere  
Couldst thou find quiet save in putting forth  
This last imagination ? Could no form  
Of being stanch thee in thy groping thought  
Save this of Man ? Puny and terrible ;  
Apt to imagine powers beyond himself  
In wind and lightning ; cunning to evoke  
From mould and flint-stone the surprising fire,  
And carve the heavy hills to spiritual shapes  
Of town and temple ; nursing in his veins  
More restlessness than called him from the void,  
Perfidies, hungers, dreams, idolatries,  
Pain, laughter, wonder, anger, sex, and song !

*Raphael.*

God had one other thought, more sweet, more  
dire ;  
Thy latest words remind thee.



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*(Behind the trees a girl's voice sings : —)*

O daughters of Jerusalem !

What said ye unto her

Who took her love by the garment's hem,

Where the tanned grape-gatherers were ?

Did any go down and see

If she led him into her house ?

Or was it aloft where the wild harts flee,

Was it high in the hills, 'neath the cedar-tree,

That she, kissed him and called him spouse ?

*(A young man and a girl come over the hill from  
the town.)*

*Uriel.*

Unto man

Woman was due. To hearts of fire more fire,

To pride of strength a still subduing strength.

*(As they pass through the coppice, the girl sings : —)*

O keepers of the city walls !

Have ye taken her veil away,

Whose hasting feet and low love-calls

Ye heard at the drop of day ?

Have ye taken her ankle-rings,

Who is fair, who hath eyes like a dove ?

Must she seek her lover, her king of kings,

Naked, stripped of her costly things ?

Must she have no garment but love ?

## SCENE II.

*A mountain glade and forest. Midnight.*

---

*Shepherd.*

Here stand, if thou wilt see, by this great bole.  
This way they passed, and hither should return.  
But pray thee, gentle god, when they draw near  
Abate the splendor of thy face, fold close  
Thine eyed and irised plumage. God thou art,  
But thou must needs be mighty to escape  
The hill girls when they rage! From these old  
boughs  
The climbing moon will soon pour deeper shade  
To screen thee more.

*Raphael.*

How looked they when they passed?

*Shepherd Boy.*

Coney, how passed the hailstorm o'er, quotha!  
Patter! patter! 'twas sung beneath i' the dark.  
I lost a birch cup full of whortleberries  
Scrambling to cover when I heard their songs.  
But when they burst across the glade, I peeped,  
And saw their breasts gleam through their angry  
hair.

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Evoë ! they had snared the village lad  
They hanker for so long. I hear them talk,  
Dawdling on well-curbs with their water-skins  
Or picking the May-apples.

*Shepherd.*

'Tis the lad  
Who sat mute at the merry threshing-stead,  
Turned from their orgies in the sacred wood  
With large bright eyes unamorous, and sang  
In lonesome places piercing lonesome songs  
Of other lives and other gods than theirs —  
Perchance of thee and thy bright-wingèd mates,  
If mates be thine, for god thou surely art.

*Shepherd Boy.*

To-night they have him limed ! Brow of the  
hawk,  
Throat of the hermit-thrush, and ring-dove eyes !

*Shepherd.*

He came across the moon-drench dragged by  
three  
Whose bodies shone like the peeled willow wand ;  
The little snakes they knot into their hair  
Lipping his neck, where oozed the red of grapes  
From his crushed garland ; his hands flung aloft

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To the symbol of their fierce licentious god.  
His eyes were large and fixed, his lips apart,  
As I have seen him in the lonesome woods,  
But madder than the maddest bacchant there !

*Raphael.*

Who cometh yonder ?

*Shepherd.*

Where ?

*Raphael.*

Across the glade.

*Shepherd.*

I see nought.

*Raphael.*

There, behind the trailing mist.  
The moonlight gathers to a ghostly shape,  
Unearthly silver, throbbing like a heart !  
It seems a beast and rider.

*(The shepherds make off.)*

Ah, I know

That icy influence, and the voice I know,  
First heard in Heaven when time began to be,—  
A voice above our voices, and a hush  
Beneath our hush, freezing the heart with fear,  
With fear the heart even of spirit-kind. . . .

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*The Angel of the Pale Horse* (sings).

The scourge of the wrath of God  
We swing and we stay :  
(*Rest, my steed, rest !*)  
On the green of the hill we have trod,  
And the green is grey.  
Ours is his scourging rod.

Yea, thy hoofs long to be fleet  
On the armed hills ;  
(*Yet rest, my steed, rest !*)  
Scent of the arrowy sleet  
Broadens thy nostrils ;  
The mown field smelleth sweet.

God giveth his loins' increase  
Into our hand ;  
(*Rest, my steed, rest !*)  
We shall establish his peace  
By sea and by land.  
Soon shall their troubling cease !

*Raphael.*

What makes thine errand here ?

*Angel of the Pale Horse.*

Still as of old.

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*Raphael.*

I think thou art way-wandered. Here is life.

*Angel of the Pale Horse*

My horse's feet err not ; they are way-wise.

*Raphael.*

Stand by me in the shade of these old boughs,  
And let no anger fan thy wings alight  
Or flake the nostrils of thy horse with fire  
When the young bacchants halloo down the  
steep.

*Angel of the Pale Horse.*

Thou feedest thy giddy and half-human mind  
Still on these little spectacles of change,  
Forgetting Heaven's great woes !

*Raphael.*

What woe can come  
Into those courts of old peatitute ?

*Angel of the Pale Horse.*

Hast thou not felt its presence there ?

*Raphael.*

Yes — nay —  
I know not . . . When I enter Heaven gate,  
Fear comes upon me, for I seem to feel

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Some subtle waning of accustomed joy,  
Some dying off of music—thin, minute,  
As the single cricket amid chorusing fields,  
Whose ceasing breaks the rapture. Often, too,  
Wan faces shun me in the woods of light  
And voices of vague dolor die away  
Along the living lilies as I come.  
But this I held a phantasy of dream,  
Bred of too earnest looking on the blight  
That falls on mortal things.

*Angel of the Pale Horse.*

It is no dream ;  
Though more mysterious, more dark than dream.  
Momently fades the splendor, momently  
Silence and dissonance like eating moths  
Scatter corruption on the choiring orbs.

*Raphael.*

No one declares the cause ?

*Angel of the Pale Horse.*

The cause is here,—  
Here in the vagrant courses of the moon,  
Who makes her lair and wanders for her love  
After her own loose law ; in yonder stars,  
Gay spendthrifts of their plenitude of fire ;  
In this most dissolute earth, who decks herself

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With gorgeous phantasy and delicate whim,  
And paces forth before the worlds to dance  
A maiden measure, modest lids downcast  
To hide her harlot's guile ; but more than these,  
And more than all, unutterably more,  
Here in the wild and sinful heart of man,—  
Of all the fruits upon creation's vine  
The thirstiest one to drain the vital breast  
Of God, wherein it grows.

*Raphael.*

Too fiery sweet  
Gushes the liquor from the vine He set,  
Man the broad leaf and maid the honeyed flower !

*(The shepherds creep back, and stand peering from  
behind the tree at the angels.)*

*Raphael (musing).*

What if they rendered up their wills to His ?  
Hushed and subdued their personality ?  
Became as members of the living tree ?

*Angel of the Pale Horse.*

A whisper grows, various from tongue to tongue,  
That so He will attempt. Those who consent  
To render up their clamorous wills to Him,



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To merge their fretful being in his peace,  
He will accept: the rest He will destroy.

*(The boy whispers to Raphael.)*

*Raphael.*

What wilt thou, little friend ?

*Shepherd Boy.*

Hither, sweet god ! But let the ghostly centaur  
stay behind.

*Shepherd.*

Lean o'er this rock and look into the gorge.  
See how their torches dip from ledge to ledge.  
They race beside some shape the torrent bears :  
The eddies seize it now, and leaning out  
Over the pool they stop to howl their hymns,  
And, now it plunges, how they madden down  
With laughter keen above the drumming foam !

*Raphael.*

Is't not a man's torn trunk ?

*Shepherd Boy.*

See those behind

Grasping the antlers of the lunging stag,  
That bellows when their torches bite his flanks !  
I know the witch who rides him !

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*Raphael.*

Come away !

That is a bleeding head she holds aloft  
Above the clutching of her comrades' hands !

*Shepherd Boy.*

No more thou'lt shun their orgies in the wood,  
Throat of the hermit-thrush and ring-dove eyes !  
Throat of the mourning thrush, thy songs are  
done ;  
Sad ring-dove eyes, the lids have shut you in !

*Shepherd.*

That is his harp the dancers bear before,  
Mocking his solemn songs of other gods  
And other lives than theirs.

*Raphael* (musing).

Those who consent  
He will accept : the rest he will destroy !

*Shepherd Boy.*

Look ! look ! the ghostly centaur goeth down.

# ACT I.

---

*Time : as in the Prelude*

---

*Persons of the Masque*

---

RAPHAEL

URIEL

MICHAEL

AZAZIEL

THE ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE

THE ANGEL OF THE WHITE HORSE

THE ANGEL OF THE RED HORSE

SPIRITS OF THE THRONE-LAMPS

THE LION OF THE THRONE

THE EAGLE OF THE THRONE

THE ANGEL OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

SPIRITS OF THE SAVED

SPIRITS OF THE LOST

MOON-SPIRITS

VOICES

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*A high mountain pass, down which flows a brook, with pools and waterfalls. Early morning.*

---

*Raphael* (climbing, sings).

On earth all is well, all is well on the sea ;  
Though the day breaks dull  
All is well.

Ere the thunder had ceased to yell  
I flew through the wash of the sea  
Wing and wing with my brother the gull.  
On the crumbling comb of the swell,  
With the spindrift slashing to lee,  
Poised we ;  
The petrel thought us asleep  
Till sidewise round on stiffened wing,  
Keen and taut to take the swing  
With the glass-green avalanches in their swerv-  
ing plunge and sweep,  
Down the glassy, down the prone,  
Swift as swerving thunder-stone,  
We shot the green crevasses  
And we hallooed down the passes  
Of the deep.

On earth all is well, all is well.  
In the weeds of the beach lay the shell

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With the sleeper within,  
And the pulse of the sleeper showed through  
The walls of his delicate house  
That will wake with the sun into silver and  
purple and blue.

Where the creek makes out and the sea makes in  
Between the low cliff-brows  
Was borne the talk of the aldered linn  
Matching the meadow's subtile din ;  
And hark, from the grey high overhead  
The lark's keen joy was shed !  
For what though the morning sulky was  
And the punctual sun belated,  
His nest was snug in the tufted grass,  
Soft-lined and stoutly plaited,  
And shine sun may or stay away  
Nests must be celebrated !

Drowsy with dawn, barely asail,  
Buzzes the blue-bottle over the shale,  
Scared from the pool by the leaping trout ;  
And the brood of turtlings clamber out  
On the log by their oozy house.  
Round the roots of the cresses and stems of the ferns  
The muskrat goes by dodges and turns ;  
Till she has seized her prey she heeds not the  
whine of her mouse.

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Lovingly, spitefully, each  
Kind unto kind makes speech ;  
Marriage and birth and war, passion and hunger  
and thirst,  
Song and plotting and dream, as it was meant  
from the first !

*(He climbs higher, and sings.)*

Peering in the dust I thought  
“How all creatures, small and great,  
For his pleasure God hath wrought !”

When I saw the robins mate  
Low I sang unto my harp,  
“Happy, happy, His estate !

“Down curved spaces He may warp  
With old planets ; long and long,  
Where the snail doth tease and carp,

“Asking with its jellied prong,  
A whole summer He may bide,  
Wondrous tiny lives among,  
Curious, unsatisfied.”

*(Still climbing.)*

The trees grow stunted in this keener air,  
And scarce the hardest blossoms dare to take  
Assurance from the sun. Southward the rocks

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Boast mosses and a poor increase of flowers,  
But all the northern shelters hold their snow.  
Such flowers as come, come not quite flower-  
like,

But smitten from their gracious habitudes  
By some alarm, some vast and voiceless cry  
That just has ceased to echo ere I came.  
These white buds stand unnaturally white,  
Breathing no odors till their terror pass ;  
Those grey souls toss their arms into the wind,  
Peer through their locks with bright distracted  
eyes

And hug the elfin horror to their breasts —  
Poor brain-turned gypsy wildlings, doomed to  
birth

In this uneasy region ! . . . Yonder lift  
The outposts of the habitable land.  
Ages of looking on the scene beyond  
Have worn the granite into shapes of woe  
And old disaster.

*(He climbs higher, to where the ravine debouches  
into the Valley of the Judgment.)*

Each time when I stand  
Upon the borders of this monstrous place,  
I still must question wherefore it was flung  
Thus ruinous with toppled peak and scaur,



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Sheer from the morning cliffs that hold up  
Heaven

To nether caverns where no foot of man  
Has clambered down, nor eye of angel dared  
To spy upon the sluggish denizens,  
If any dwell so deep. What giant plow  
Harnessed to behemoth and mastodon  
Set this slope furrow down the side of the world?  
And to what harvest? . . . Here the sons of  
men,

Living and dead and yet unborn, might come  
Unto the final judgment; here the lost  
Might make one desperate stand. . . . What  
moveth there?

What leonine and wingèd shape is he  
Steals up yon gorge all desolate of light  
Whence voices of fierce-tongued and desperate  
streams

Sound faint as throats of nooning doves? Till  
now

Never have I beheld a living thing  
Amid these wastes. What manner beast is he  
That he hath power to awe me, though removed  
So far the fallen vastness of a cliff  
Wherefrom a temple might be quarried, looks  
Fit for a shepherd's sling? . . . Surely he  
comes

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From nameless battle yonder in the depths ;  
But whither steals he homeward there aloft ?  
What lair is his cloud-hidden in the snows,  
Whose mates and loves wait 'neath the desert  
palms

To hear him tell his deed ? Huge was the fight  
That left that mighty prowess broken so !  
For sorely is he broken : now he stops  
And lies exhausted by an icy pool,  
Now labors up the shale, skirts the bald top,  
Drops with fierce caution down the further  
slope

Eyeing the next hard pass. I wonder . . . ?  
No. . . .

Strange ! 'twas a blood-drop fell upon that flower  
A-tremble from the brink. Another here  
Upon the ground-moss — nay, upon my hand —  
It falls all round me ! . . . (*Looking upward*)

Ah, an eagle goes  
Lame from the battle, mate or duellist  
Of him who crept by yonder. Even here  
I see the vast wings, shattered and unpenned,  
Almost refuse their labor ; now he swerves  
To rest upon a needled dolomite,  
Then upward grievously another stage  
Toward some sad eyrie where his heart abides.

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I too must seek my eyrie — sad enough,  
Since there my heart abides not any more,  
Amid the waste infinitudes of light  
Missing the flow of day, the reflux dark ;  
Amid the bliss of unconcerning eyes  
Remembering woman's anguish, man's resolve,  
Youth's wistful darling guess, kindled and  
quenched  
And quenched and kindled yet a little year  
In eyes too frail to hold their meaning long  
Where chance and enmity conspire with death.

*(He flies up the Valley.)*

## ACT I. SCENE II.

*Above the peaks that crown the head of the Valley of Judgment.*

---

*Raphael (flying).*

Soon will the cliffs of Heaven give easier way,  
For though my heart grows human, yet my frame  
With immaterial things accordance keeps,  
And to my feet these spiritual hills  
Feel native, and the climate kind to breathe ;  
Still kindlier for the shredded mist of song  
That wanders here at morning and at eve  
Whispering witless words and prophecy.

*Voices (above).*

Through the vines of tangled light  
In the jungles of the sun  
Swept the Hunter in his might  
And his lion-beagle dun  
Gaped for prey to left and right.

O'er the passes of the moon  
Strode the Hunter in his wrath :  
The eagle sniffed the icy noon,  
“ Master, knowest thou the path ?  
Shall we meet thy foe-man soon ?

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“On what interstellar plain,  
'Mid what comet's blinding haze,  
Storm of star dust, meteor rain,  
Shall we spy his crouching gaze,  
Leap at him, and end thy pain?”

Peace is on the heavenly meres,  
Sabbath lies on Paradise ;  
But the little Throne-lamp fears,  
For she sees the Master's eyes,  
And she tastes the Master's tears.

*Raphael.*

Many an age your song has hovered round  
This theme of Heaven's distress. What mean ye  
now ?

Was that the lion-hound of which ye sing  
Crept wounded hither, masterless, this hour ?

*Voices (as before).*

Where had his gadding spirit led ?  
Beside what peopled water-head  
Stooped he, or on what sleeping face  
Was he intent the dream to trace ?  
Had creature love upon him fawned  
Or had he drunk of mortal mirth  
That he knew not what a morning dawned

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Over his darling earth ?  
Heard not the storm, heard not the cries,  
Heard not the talk of the startled skies  
Over the guilty earth ?

*Raphael.*

Those dubious voices fade, and in their stead  
Succeeds a sound more anxious and perturbed,  
Voices and mutterings of supernal wrath  
Or whisperings of fear. . . . Ah, there aloft  
Upon the beetling rosy crag they stand,  
The pale horse and the white horse and the  
red !

What rage vermilions his expanded wing ?  
Why streams his mane so fiery on the wind  
Back from his staring eyeballs ? What should  
make

His brother's steady candor pulse and throb  
And falter like the light on cavern walls  
Rocked under by the tide ? O never yet  
Did the pale horse seem terrible as now,  
Pawing the margent cliff and snorting down  
Pale fire into the Valley ! . . . Brothers, hail !  
I fare from outland. Tell me what befalls.

*Angel of the White Horse.*

He strays too much abroad. He hath not heard.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Angel of the Pale Horse.*

They say that he has lived too much in the sun  
And waxes mortal, mortal. We shall see.

*Angel of the Red Horse.*

Saw'st thou aught stirring in the valley deeps?

*Raphael.*

Far down below a beast crept wounded hither.  
Why gaze ye on each other thus aghast?

*Angel of the Red Horse.*

Cast ye that way — the passes and defiles!  
This way will I.

*(The Angels of the Horses disappear.)*

*Raphael.*

What news has spread concern  
Even to these marks and purlieus of God's  
dream?

Below the sun's pale rim a paleness moves,  
Grows larger, blots the disc with deepening  
light. . . .

And now above the Valley treads a shape  
Too lordly to be aught but Uriel!

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Poised on a peak he halts to gaze behind ;  
Now wingeth nearer, in the Eagle's track —

*Uriel (approaching).*

Hail, brother.

*Raphael.*

Hail ! Saw'st thou the fight below ?

*Uriel.*

Of what I saw I cannot spell the sense,  
Too darkly hid for me !

*Raphael.*

Share me at least  
Thy news, though scant. That winged and  
brindled bulk,  
Whence came it and what quarry did it seek ?  
And the great eagle, was it mate or foe ?

*Uriel.*

No earthly beast it was, no earthly bird,  
Seeking no earthly quarry. More than this  
I know not how to say, ere I have mused  
Where in the sun's core light and thought are  
one.

*Raphael.*

But yet conjecture clamors at thy heart.



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Uriel.*

Thou knowest what whispers are abroad in  
Heaven ;

How God pines ever for his broken dream,  
Broken by vague division, whence who knows !  
And pangs of restless love too strong to quench  
Save by the putting of creation forth,—  
Quenched then but for a moment, since the  
worlds

He made to soothe Him only vex Him more,  
Being compact of passion, violent,  
Exceeding quarrelsome, and in their midst  
Man the arch-troubler. Fainter whispers say  
He ponders how to win his prodigal  
By some extremity to render back  
The heritage abused, to merge again  
Each individual will into His will :  
Till when, his pangs increase.

*Raphael.*

A nine days' tale.

I hold Him no such weakling ! Yet . . . and  
yet . . .

I have beheld . . . I know not . . . pallor couched  
On brows that wont to beacon ; through the orbs  
Quivers of twilight, hints and flecks of  
change. . . .

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

We cannot be, we would not be, I deem,  
The same as ere space was, or time began  
To trellis there life's wild and various bloom.  
— We linger. Let me hear.

*Uriel.*

Some things He made  
Out of his wistfulness, his ecstasy,  
And made them lovely fair ; yet other some  
Out of his loathing, out of his remorse,  
Out of chagrin at the antinomy  
Cleaving his nature ; these are monstrous shapes,  
Whereof the most abhorred one dwells below  
Within the caves and aged wells of dark  
Toward which this Valley plunges. There it  
waits  
Hoarding its ugly strength till time be full.

*Raphael.*

How nam'st thou him ?

*Uriel*

The spirits meditative  
Darkly name him : The Worm that Dieth not,—  
Perhaps the scourge reserved for those who prove  
Rebellious in the event, perhaps himself  
Scourge of the Scourger, biding but his hour

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

To 'venge his miscreation. So he lies,  
A thing most opposite to spirit-kind,  
Most hated by the Four who guard the Throne,  
Within the viewless panoply of light  
Immediately ministrant. To them,  
But to the Lion and the Eagle most,  
Is given to gaze in the Eternal eyes  
Like hounds about a hunter's knee, that watch  
Each passion written on their master's brow,  
And having read his trouble, steal away  
To taste the troubler's flesh beneath their fangs.  
So stole away the Lion of the Throne,  
The Eagle for his aid. Beneath the moon  
Last night I came upon them stealing down,  
Too eager on the scent to mark my flight.  
Even to the splintered curb of the last profound  
I followed, and thence heard the battle rage  
Bellowed above by the loath elements,  
Till dawn showed in the east, an ashen dawn  
Clotted and drizzled o'er with sullen light.

*Raphael.*

Their hearts were faithful. They were fain to  
save  
The Master from some sad extremity. . . .  
But not in yonder depths, alas, doth lie  
The arch-foe of his peace. Would it were so !

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

A monster bred to hatred in the dark.  
Would it were so ! not rather, as we fear,  
Man the uplifted stature, the proud mind,  
The laughter !

*Uriel.*

Speedily our doubt shall end,  
For not much more delayeth the event.  
— My watch is set within the sun, and thither  
My hour constrains me.

*Raphael.*

Heavenward I. Farewell !

## ACT I. SCENE III.

*A garden in Heaven. The Eagle sits on the Tree of Knowledge ; the Lion and the Angel of the White Horse rest beneath.*

---

*Angel of the White Horse.*

Deep in the purple umbrage droops the bird,  
His sick eye sealed beneath the weary lid  
Which scarce his right wing's torn and gaping  
gold

Disfeathered hideth, since long hours ago  
He sidewise tucked his wounded head away,  
Shunning the light's offence ; and through the  
boughs

Let sink this mighty pinion sinister  
A vast and ruined length, whereof the plumes  
That yesterday planed sunlike o'er the Throne  
Are all blood-rusted now and misted on  
With obscure breathings of a nadir clime.  
Between the Lion's paws a thousand flowers  
Have withered since he laid him groaning down,  
And in uneasy slumber racked with dreams  
Flingeth at whiles a sanguine froth abroad  
To sear what rests of herbage or of bloom  
Unwithered by his breath. They saw me not

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Though close I tracked them up the cloudy  
heights,  
Nor once have marked me through the exhausted  
hours  
While here I wait the time to question them.

Hark ! in their dreams they speak, and in their  
dreams  
Do act again their awful enterprise.

### *The Eagle.*

Creep softly, softly ! Heaven's streets are still,  
Each seraph sentry drowseth on his hill,  
The winds of song are folded, and as flowers  
Folded are all the domes and dreaming towers.  
Creep softly, softly ; I am with thee, mate !  
Softly I soar above the shrouded gate,  
And till thou comest past the warding swords  
Lone in the outer moonlight I will wait.

### *The Lion.*

Wing swiftly ! For the walls of chrysopras  
Have melted at my roar to let me pass ;  
But Heaven is up and peers with mazèd eyes,  
And wings are weighed to hinder our emprise.  
Wing swiftly, swiftly, down the glooming air,  
Past cloud and precipice and mountain stair,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

For ere another morning drowns the stars  
We must have met the Worm within his lair.

### *The Eagle.*

Drear are the depths, O brother,  
Bitter the fight !  
Vainly we stand by each other.  
Thy might and my might  
Are as straw, in the flame and the smother.

### *Angel of the White Horse.*

O ye familiars benedite,  
Who, hidden in the eternal glow,  
Keep guard about the Throne,  
What things were given to your sight  
Ere to the hold of such a foe  
Ye dared to venture down ?

### *The Lion (awaking).*

Ages and ages we gazed,  
Stricken at heart and amazed,  
Till the morning look  
From His brow was strook,  
Silver and vair  
In the flame of his hair  
And his lip with anguish crazed.

Then low I spoke to my mate,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

“My heart must unburden its hate.  
I will walk through the pathless woods  
Where the wild stars hatch their broods,  
I will girdle the steppes  
Where the meteor creeps  
Like a slug on the rimy sward.  
Perhaps at the trampled brink  
Where the Bear goes down to drink,  
Perhaps where on the purple leas  
Dance the young Pleiades,  
Somewhere at length  
I shall laugh in my strength  
Spying the Shape abhorred,  
Somewhere at last  
I shall break my fast  
On the flesh of the Foe of the Lord !”

### *The Eagle.*

Wearily thou crept'st back  
Sore from the track ;  
Thy hide was torn and thy tongue was black.  
Long thou did'st slumber and deep.

### *The Lion.*

A voice came in my sleep  
Saying, “Why wander so far ?  
Nearhand lieth the earth



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Full of rumors of war,  
Of passion and pride no dearth.  
There in his cavern cold  
Lurketh the Dragon old ;  
He lies and pastures, plain to see,  
On God's heart, sluggishly,  
As once he sucked of the fruits of gold  
Ages ago, on the Eden tree.

### *Angel of the White Horse.*

Hearken ! A wind walks in the Tree  
Though the lily-heads are still,  
From bough to bough inscrutably  
It feeleth out its will ;  
And now the leaves, atremble long,  
Utter impulsive song.

### *The Angel of the Tree.*

Not in the loosened whirlwinds that invade  
The sun's white core with shade,  
Not in the wandering tribes of fire that sweep  
With rapine through the deep,  
Not in the venom of the cavernd Worm  
That drowseth out his term,  
Nay, not in these or aught akin to these  
Consisteth of God's groaning and disease  
The incorporeal germ.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Though all that He hath made  
Rebels and is exceeding turbulent,  
Though all his loins' increase  
Go after pleasures other than He meant,  
And with excessive claims  
Drain and defile the founts of his content,—  
Yet only one of all the shapes He brought  
Out of the gulfs of thought,  
One only creature of his quickening hands  
Hath from its brow  
With reckless laugh and with reiterate vow  
Stripped clean away all decencies and shames ;  
Till with continual strife  
And divagant demands  
Of separate life,  
The searching and the scornful heart of Man  
God's inmost being maims.

### *The Eagle.*

For naught have my wings been broken,  
Vain are the wounds of thy paws !  
Hark what the Tree hath spoken.

### *Angel of the Pale Horse.*

Hush ! For a murmur shakes the bloom  
That once drank Eden dew,  
A shadowed wind like a word of doom  
Darkens the branches through.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

### *The Angel of the Tree.*

Now draweth on the time declared of old  
When He shall make division of the fold,  
Shall winnow out the kernels from the chaff,  
Shall tread his grapes, and in a silver cup  
Chalice the good wine up  
And cast away the pummace and the draff.

Too long and much too long  
He hath endured his wrong.  
A little vine of life He set to grow  
Not far off from the footstool of his feet,  
That it might be in spring a pleasant show  
Of budding charities,  
In autumn clothe itself with temperate sweet  
Of love's long-mellowing fruit  
So mild the angel youth might pluck and eat  
Nor feel the mortal savor trouble shoot  
Across their holy ease.  
But now the vine,  
Grown waste and riotous, has sent its root  
With monstrous loop and twine  
In circles nine times nine  
About the bowels of his holy hill,  
And million-fold its mouth  
Has drunk his songful springs and quenched his  
veins with drouth.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Twelve shapes of sculptured dream  
On Heaven's twelve gateways gleam,  
Jasper, chalcedony, and jade,  
Beryl and lazuline ;  
And there-amid the rank leaves of the vine  
Earthy and lush  
At morn with laughter push,  
At evening droop and fade.  
Its carnal fruits are insolently laid,  
With stealth and hasty birth,  
Even in God's streets and in his garden bowers,  
And from the topmost glory of his towers  
Singeth and maketh mirth  
The exultation of its sudden flowers.  
Long and too long hath his compassion shrunk  
From laying of the axe unto the trunk ;  
Nor, though the blade is ground, and kindled  
white  
The furnace, will He quite  
Even now,  
Even now, though day is late,  
Utterly burn and cast into the slough  
The thing He made to love and still is loath to  
hate.  
But first He will put off eternity  
And put on body of their flowering clay,  
That thus brought near He may familiarly

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Close in each ear the word of pleading say.  
Each blindling heart that stubborn all astray  
Shall hear Him calling closer than the blood  
That both its ruby gates with tumult fills ;  
And to the wild procession of their wills  
Raving idolatrous in the sacred wood,  
His voice of poignant love  
Though quiet as the voice of dust to dust  
Shall clearly sound above  
The beaten cymbal and the shrewd-blown shell,  
Saying as soft as rain,  
“The gift I gave I fain would have again,  
Ye have not used it well !  
Break ye the thyrsus and the phallic sign,  
Put off the ivy and the violet,  
A dearer standard shall before you shine  
And for your lustral foreheads ye shall twine  
A fairer garland yet,  
When the processions mild  
Shall greet you and behold you reconciled  
And sing you home across the deathless asphodel.  
But ye who will not so,  
Take up the phallus and the wreathèd snake,  
Let the wine flow,  
And let the mountains echo to your yell.  
Your ways lie by the burning of the lake  
Long kindled for your sake :

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Be ye not slow,

But go

Urging your panther teams through the wide  
woods of Hell !”

## ACT II.

---

*Time : during and immediately after the Crucifixion*

---





## ACT II.

*The outlying plains of Heaven. Storm and darkness.*

---

*Raphael.*

But now the air was thick with panic shades  
Who made no answer when I cried to them  
Across the vortices of spiritual dark.  
Upon what stricken plain have I been flung,  
Whose miscreations blot with leaves like hands  
The far horizon light? Some glow-worm ghost  
Flees yonder, pauses, turns, and flees again :  
A woman spirit, by the anguish sweet  
Wakes in me at her anguish. Sister, hear !

*The Spirit of the Throne-Lamp.*

O Light undimmed, if thou art powerful,  
Speak to the wind ! For see, my wings are  
torn  
And shelter not my lamp : 'tis almost spent.

*Raphael.*

Me too the wind afflicts. Together thus  
Our wings will shield the flame. Already, see,  
It climbs and steadies in the crystal bowl,  
And purges half the terror from thine eyes,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Thou love-lamp of the Lord! Are these his  
storms?

By his allowance are we thus distraught?

*The Spirit of the Lamp.*

His throne is empty and Himself is gone.

*Raphael.*

Child, fright hath crazed thee. Lean thy shak-  
ing breast

On mine: shut out the terrifying dark.

*The Spirit of the Lamp.*

He died with grieving o'er the world He made.

*Raphael.*

We live in Him; with Him shall all things die.  
Bright burns thy lamp; take heart, and tell me  
soon

What hath befallen in Heaven.

*The Angel of the Lamp.*

I know not well.

My secret lies upon my heart too long. . . .

*Raphael.*

Nay, tremble not. Rather look out and see  
What presence comes: its influence makes cheer;

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

'Twill be some spirit glad and resolute.  
Put by thy wings and look ; my eyes are blind  
Watching the feverous pulsings of thy lamp.

*The Angel of the Lamp.*

'Tis he whose tent is pitched within the sun,  
But hardly glad, no longer resolute.  
Even Uriel's lordly light the wind subdues.

*Raphael.*

Hail, Uriel !

*The Angel of the Lamp.*

Hail !

*Uriel.*

Hail, brother ! Sister, hail !

*Raphael.*

Close, lend thy breadth of wing ! Thou art a  
strength.

Speak, if thou knowest what has come to pass.

*Uriel.*

Something I know, and hither through the  
storms

That vex the deeps and on disastrous shores  
Fling all frail stars that coast and merchant  
there,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

I come to learn the sequel — if to learn  
Be mine, in such a matter.

*Raphael.*

Speak.

*The Angel of the Lamp.*

Oh, speak !

*Uriel.*

'Neath pleachèd boughs and vines of ancient fire  
In the white centre of the sun I lay,  
And watched the armies of young seraphim  
Naked at play on the candescent plains,  
When suddenly the skies of flame were rent  
In sunder, and the plain became a sea  
Whereon the whirlwind walked through welter-  
ing lanes  
To the sun's core. With pain I made my way  
'Twixt element and angry element.  
Vast shapes of gathering and dissolving fire  
That seemed as beast and bird, and awful frames  
Of shadow, dubious whether bird or beast  
Or fish or reptile, hidden until now  
In shifting caverns of the photosphere,  
Rose up across my path ; and in their eyes  
Sat fear, and on their limbs astonishment.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

At last, long battling and bewildered oft,  
I gained the solar coasts. Wide round I saw  
Each planet passion-changed, each haggard star  
Reeling from flight and swoon, and the great  
deep

Toiled like a runner's heart who runs with  
death.

Calm at confusion's centre stood the Earth,  
A spiritual nimbus round her brow  
Like as a woman angel-visited,  
Sightless and deaf to all things save her swoon  
And her heart's solemn hallelujah.

*The Spirit of the Lamp.*

Oh,  
What hath He sent upon the joyous Earth ?  
The Earth that has the blue and little flowers  
Thou brought'st me once to wreath my lamp  
withal,  
Earth-lover ! But they faded very soon,  
And left a nameless hunger in my heart.  
Thy Earth was chosen, Raphael ! Art thou glad ?

*Raphael.*

Not glad nor sorry, sister, since not yet  
I know the meaning of our brother's words.  
Earth-wandering, and the shows of restless time,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Have weighed the eyelids of my spirit down.  
Speak, Uriel, and speak plain. What followed  
then?

*Uriel.*

That rapt and solemn aspect of the Earth  
Soon drew me to her through the shuddering air ;  
And circling swiftly round her as she went  
I neared the twilight verge that dipped toward  
night.

Here on a sunset hill I stayed my wings.  
Rabble of people and much soldiery  
Poured thence into their city gates ; the place  
Was steeped in level splendor after storm,  
And like to pillars of advancing fire  
Three trees of crucifixion loomed, whereon  
Three men hung crucified, one beautiful  
Beyond the measure of Man's flowering clay,  
Conspicuous o'er the world placed for a sign.  
Slowly to meet my gaze the dying lids  
Were lifted, and the faint eyes swam on mine—

*Raphael.*

Nay, sister, sink not ! We are three : be strong.

*The Angel of the Lamp.*

I know whose eyes swam faint on thine ! I know  
The sorrows that He suffered for his world,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Ere ever He put off eternity  
And put on clay, to be by hands of clay  
Hung for a sign !

*Raphael.*

Above the pausing wind  
Hearken ! a rush of pinions. Who are these  
That put an influence in this bitter air  
Like Spring when she comes galliard from the  
south ?

*Uriel.*

The globe of amber light wherein they fly  
Goes ashen in the flaws. That ship of souls  
Tacks in the wind's teeth and is blown abroad  
Nigh Heaven's last confines. Now it veers  
again,  
And groweth larger : they will pass this way.

Brother, lift up thy voice and sing to them.  
These be the spirits that within the moon  
Wander the lucent forests ; shy are they  
Amid their wood-thoughts and their shy love-  
thoughts,

Only by song their minds are quickly swayed.  
Wide has the ocean been for their frail wings,  
And wild the panic that has driven them forth  
From their still lunar isle. Thy song shall be  
A kindly net to snare them as they pass.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Raphael (sings).*

Shore-birds wet with deep-sea dew,  
Fold your wings and stay your flight ;  
Stay, stay !  
Long was the way,  
Grieved with wind is your tender light,  
Stay, till our love rekindle you.

Wood-birds that through lunar glens  
Flood the noon of night with singing,  
Hearken, hearken !  
Our minds undarken :  
O'er your phosphor forests winging,  
Say, what shadow scared you thence ?

*(The moon-spirits alight in a circle round the three  
angels.)*

*The Spirit of the Lamp.*

How fair they must have been ere yet their  
light  
Was ruined with the wind and flying spume,  
Being so fair, though ruined !

*First Moon-Spirit.*

Who are ye  
That seem so safe when every shaken world



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Voideth its tenantry, and even those stars  
That keep the marches and strongholds of space  
Flee with affrighted eyes down alien deeps,  
Or cling to the necks of comets, whispering  
words

That stop them in their courses, though they be  
Violent souls and outlaw.

*Uriel.*

We are such  
As share God's sorrow in his evil time,  
And wait the issue of the desperate draught  
He drinks this hour to win surcease of pain.

*Second Moon-Spirit.*

Speak simply to the simple ; make thy words  
Accordant to our minds ; our element  
Is the moon's meek, unintellectual day.

*Uriel.*

You in the moon have felt His pangs more  
near  
Than may the passionate dwellers in quick  
worlds  
Wrapped in their own hot being ; for your  
sphere  
Has cooled the angry metal in its veins,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Its spent volcanoes utter now no more  
Their proud and hasty meanings ; age by age  
Your world tends back to silence, rendering up  
Its selfhood and control into his hands  
Whence it rebelled, like all his prodigals,  
To spend the hoard of fire He dowered them  
with

Too rashly. So it hangs, a doubtful ground :  
Now, brooded on by powers of heavenly peace,  
It goeth darkling and your hearts are dumb,  
Now, caught within the orbits of desire,  
It gathers ghostly splendor ; in your woods  
Old rites are paid, and o'er your crystal peaks,  
That burn at the heart like genie-haunted  
gems,

Sweeps revelry so wild that mortal men,  
Shepherds or sailors, gazing half a night,  
Wander at dawn brain-crazed.

### *Third Moon-Spirit.*

Angel, we wait,  
We wait with trembling till thy lips declare  
This present hour's disaster. Whose the arm  
That broke our steppes in twain, and from the  
roots

Of cloven hills haled shapes of former men  
And frames of monstrous ravin, ages dead ?

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Whose mouth was set against the moon-children,  
To blow their sheeny pleasancess to dust  
And scare them from their world ?

What plains are these  
Whose spiritual pulse of light and dark  
Throbs as if hope and terror struggled there ?

### *Uriel.*

These are the plains of heaven, least create  
Of God's creation, nearest to his hand  
When He would discreate, as now perchance,  
The deeps that teem with rebel energies  
Wanton, unteachable, intolerable,  
Whereof the soul of man, though meant to be  
His dearest pride and joy, is frowardest  
And first to vex him : were Man's will subdued,  
The rest beneath his banners soon would swarm.  
Long hath He warned and pleaded, but to-day  
With a most searching bosom-whisper pleads ;  
For in their likeness clad He gives Himself  
To die that they may live, accepting Him,  
Or, still rejecting, and preferring still  
Their own unto his pleasure, may be cast  
To outer darkness and the second death.  
These storms and perturbations are his throes,  
And here we wait until He reassume  
His attributes and kingdom.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*The Angel of the Lamp.*

Will He come?  
And will the ancient peace be ours again?  
Speak, brother, will it be?

*Uriel.*

Hope still is ours.  
Tremble no more, sweet Flame! Good hope is  
ours.

*The Angel of the Lamp.*

My secret lies upon my heart too long!  
Since first the trumpet told of Time begun,  
And in the seven bowls the seven flames,  
So white before and still, a patient praise,  
Leaped up in restless colours, fear hath stood  
A whispering eighth among the sisters seven,  
A thin small voice singing above our songs,  
A hush beneath our hush. Each side the throne  
The mystic olive trees began to blow,  
And on the candlesticks that burn beneath  
Dropped dying bloom and fruitage mortal ripe.  
When evening spread upon the holy hill  
Its excellence of peace, small restless wings,  
To Heaven unnative, fluttered round our lamps,  
Forever circling nearer till they threw  
Into the flame their lives of longing dust,  
And though we plucked the char out hastily

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

A climbing rust had dulled our torch of praise.  
Nay, where the very breast of God should be,  
Forever panoplied with viewless light,  
Gnawed darkness like a worm, and when this  
wind

That never came till now, blew wide and thin  
The splendor of the Throne-stead — hush, bend  
close ! —

*His eyes were old with pain.* Then all at once —

O brothers, is it hours or æons since ? —

Intolerable lambence lit the air ;

The sea of glass whereon the nations stand

At morn to carol, curdled red as blood,

And rolled a moaning billow to the shore ;

The Eagle screamed ; upon the tabled gem

Where was the footstool of God's feet, lay prone

The Lion's whining muzzle ; and the Calf

Bleated beneath his six-times-folded wing.

My sister lamps were quenched, but ere I fled

I crept up past the Lion's awful paws,

Up past the shrouding light, and saw His place

Was empty. . . . Is it hours or æons since ?

I found the shadowed fields about me, grey

Each hearted amaranth and asphodel,

The living forests with their veins of light

Looped thickly, and the burning flowers between,

The living waters, and the lily souls

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Along the waters — all a stricken grey !  
Where'er I fled or turned it still pursued —  
That Nothingness that sat upon the Throne ;  
And now it waits to seize me — yonder, here !

### *Uriel.*

Hush, be of better comfort. Through the plain  
Auroral pallors wake the asphodels ;  
The wind at last is still ; and eastward far  
Beyond the friths and islands of that sea  
Which spreads before His dwelling in the Mount,  
Behold, beginning glories star the dusk,  
As if the clouds rolled burning from the throne,  
To show us signs and wonders risen there.  
And hark ! the happy presage of keen wings  
Ingathering from the corners of the winds ;  
Large light, and silvery calls and far replies,  
And deeps of song that call unto the deeps.

### *Raphael.*

His agony is done : a little while  
He tarries, but He surely comes again  
Even though but for a little.

### *The Spirit of the Lamp.*

Let us join  
These hasting companies whose steady flight

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Goes tempered to all manner instruments  
Borne in their midst by hidden taborists,  
Lute-players, and them that pluck the dul-  
cimer —

All sweet musicians ! Surely these go in  
Unto some holy matter.

*Raphael.*

Surely. Come !





## ACT III.

---

*Time : Scene I. before dawn, Scene II. after sunset,  
of the Day of Judgment*

---



ACT III. SCENE I.

*A peak above the Valley of the Judgment. Between midnight and dawn.*

---

*Raphael.*

Alas, on this lone height my pinions fail,  
And half my dreaming world unvisited !  
As a sick woman, who, when morning glooms  
Must leave for aye the house where she was  
wed,  
Yearns to behold the thrice-familiar rooms,  
And rises trembling, and with watch-lamp  
goes  
From chamber unto chamber, stopping now  
To muse upon her dead child's pictured brow,  
And now to dream of little merriments  
Enacted, and of trivial dear events,  
Until her weakness grows  
Upon her, and she sinks and cannot rise,—  
So, since upon the sad and prescient skies  
The darkness of this ultimate night was shed,  
My feet from haunted place to haunted place  
Of my familiar earth have kept their pace :  
Alas, that ere the half be mused upon,  
And while the coming up of dreadful day

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Is still an hour away  
My wing is broken, and my strength is gone !

Star after star goes out above the peak,  
And only from the morning star is shed  
Keen influence. Great star ! He is not weak,  
His pinions fail not ; for he never quaffed  
This frail and fiery air that mortals drink :  
He has not heard when little children laughed ;  
He has not watched old pensioners break their  
bread ;

To woman's lips he never held the draught  
Of anguish, that a man-child might be born ;  
The May woods never saw him hiding there  
His wings and flaming hair  
To watch the young men pluck the budded  
thorn ;

Nor has his mouth put off its seraph scorn  
To hang with startled cry  
Of grievous inquiry  
Above the stoic forehead of the dead.

O heart of man, how I have loved thee !  
Hidden in sunlight what sweet hours were mine  
Of lover-like espial upon thine ;  
Thrilled with thy shadowy fears, half-guessing  
The hope that lit thy veins like wine,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Musing why this was bane and that thy blessing,  
My angel-ichor moved by all that moved thee ;  
Though oft the meanings of thy joy and woe  
Were hid, were hard to know ;  
For deep beneath the clear crystalline waters  
That feed the hearts of Heaven's sons and daughters,  
    ters,

The roots of thy life go.

O Dreamer ! O Desirer ! Goer down  
Unto untravelled seas in untried ships !  
O crusher of the unimagined grape  
On unconceivèd lips !

O player upon a lordly instrument  
No man or god hath had in mind to invent ;  
O cunning how to shape  
Effulgent Heaven and scoop out bitter Hell  
From the little shine and saltness of a tear ;  
Sieger and harrier,  
Beyond the moon, of thine own builded town,  
Each morning won, each eve impregnable,  
Each noon evanished sheer !

Thou fiery essence in a vase of fire !  
What quarry gathered and packed down the clay  
To make this delicate vessel of desire ?  
Who digged it ? In what mortar did he bray ?  
Whose wistful hand did lead

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

All round the lyric brede ?  
Who tinted it, and burned the dross away ?  
“He, He,” (doth some one say ?)  
“Whose mallet-arm is lift and knitted hard  
To break it into shard !”  
Were that the Maker’s way ?  
Who brings to being aught,  
Love is his skill untaught,  
Love is his ore, his furnace, and his tool ;  
Who makes, destroyeth not,  
But much is dashed in pieces by the fool.

O struggler in the mesh  
Of spirit and of flesh  
Some subtle hand hath tied to make thee Man,  
That now is unto thee a wide domain  
To laugh and love and dare in for a span,  
And straightway is a prison-house of pain,  
A den of loathing, and a violent place,  
A hold for unclean wing and cruel face  
That mock the searèd heart and darkened brain,—  
My bosom yearns above thee at the end,  
Thinking of all thy gladness, all thy woe ;  
Whoever is thy foe,  
I am thy friend, thy friend !  
As thou hast striven, I strove to comprehend  
The piteous sundering set betwixt the zenith

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

And nadir of thy fates,  
Whose life doth serious message send  
To moon and stars, anon itself demeaneth  
Below the brute estates.  
Wild heart, that through the steepening arcs art  
    whirled  
To a bright master-world,  
And in a trice must blindly backward hark  
To the subterranean dark,  
Deem not that mighty gamut-frame was set  
For wanton finger-fret !  
No empty-hearted gymnast of the strings  
Gave the wild treble wings,  
Or flung the shuddering bass from hell's last  
    parapet.  
Though now the Master sad  
With vehemence shall break thee,  
Not lightly did He make thee,  
That morning when his heart was music-mad :  
Lovely importings then his looks and gestures  
    had.

Whatever cometh with to-morrow's light,  
Oh, deem not that in idlesse or in spite  
The strong knot of thy fate  
Was woven so implicate,  
Or that a jester put thee in that plight.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Darkly, but oh, for good, for good,  
The spirit infinite  
Was throned upon the perishable blood ;  
To moan and to be abject at the neap,  
To ride portentous on the shrieking scud  
Of the aroused flood,  
And halcyon hours to preen and prate in the boon  
Tropical afternoon.

Not in vain, not in vain,  
The spirit hath its sanguine stain,  
And from its senses five doth peer  
As a fawn from the green windows of a wood ;  
Slave of the panic woodland fear,  
Boon-fellow in the game of blood and lust  
That fills with tragic mirth the woodland year,  
Searched with starry agonies  
Through the breast and through the reins,  
Maddened and led by lone moon-wandering cries.  
Dust unto dust complains,  
Dust laugheth out to dust,  
Sod unto sod moves fellowship,  
And the soul utters, as she must,  
Her meanings with a loose and carnal lip ;  
But deep in her ambiguous eyes  
Forever shine and slip  
Quenchless expectancies,



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

And in a far-off day she seems to put her trust.

. . . . .

O Morning Star ! that dost arise  
Haughtily now from off thy flaming throne,  
And standest in thy wings' outspread zone,  
With hand uplift and intense vision glad,  
More kindling while thy brother planets fade,—  
Wilt thou, the seldom-speaker, speak and say  
If this, if this be then the far-off day  
When God shall give the substance for the shade ?  
When Man shall wake, and be no more adrad  
To lose the precious dream he dreamed he had,  
And the long groping of his heart be stayed ?

. . . . .

He answers not ; the globèd light he wears  
Largens and largens like a wondrous flower,  
And in the midst his wavering radiance fades.  
Behold, upon the waters, them that be  
Above the heavens, how the lily light  
Blooms mystical and vast ! till all the stars  
And all the gathered clouds that wait the day  
Are blotted by its rondure. Dimly grows  
From height to depth of that magnificence  
A splendor sad that taketh feature on. . . .  
Lo ! where God's body hangs upon the cross,  
Drooping from out yon skiey Golgotha  
Above the wills and passions of the world !

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

O doomed, rejected world, awake ! awake !  
See where He droopeth white and pitiful !  
Behold, his drooping brow is pitiful !  
Cry unto Him for pity. Climb, oh, haste,  
Climb swiftly up yon skiey Golgotha  
To where his feet are wounded ! Even now  
He must have pity on his childish ones ;  
He knoweth, He remembereth they are dust !

. . . . .  
Earth slumbers ; and the freshening winds begin  
To blow from out the unuprisen east ;  
Yet still abides that awful Eidolon  
Large on the face of Heaven, and its light  
Is as the patience of a thousand moons  
Upon the peaks and gorges of the vale.  
Now on that giant forehead slowly dawns  
Again the star, the bright, the morning star ;  
Amid the changeful lampings of his orb  
The Angel stands, with keen out-spread wings,  
And lifted hand and intense vision glad,  
As when he led his brother orbs in song.  
But yet no word nor any breath of song  
Begins upon the region silences :  
All's hushed as ere the first-created throat  
Was vocal.

Now remoter wonders wake,  
Impatient glories gather and transpeer

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

That sky-suspended Image. Three by three  
The beryl gates, the gates of chrysoprase,  
And those that are a very perfect pearl  
Open, and all the citadel of God  
Even to the bright acropolis thereof,  
The temple of the ark of the covenant,  
Lies open, steeped in wroth light from the  
Throne ;  
And all the heavenly folk are busy there.

ACT III. SCENE II.

*A peak above the Valley of the Judgment. Twilight.*

---

*Michael.*

God's vengeance is full wrought, unless this  
form

That labors from the dark mists of the Vale  
Be one whose strength has overlived our wrath,  
And the last hunger of whose heart shall be  
To creep from out that mass of death, and wait  
High on these ruined hills for death to come  
At nightfall, when the last strong soul must  
die.

Nay, 'tis no mortal creature, though he wears  
A fallen unhappy splendor, and his wings,  
All eyed and irised like the gladdest ones  
That glimmer in the pageantry of Heaven,  
Are folded sadly o'er his downcast eyes  
As now he sits and dreams. 'Tis Raphael.

*(Michael descends.)*

Why sitteth Raphael disconsolate  
After the manifest glories of this day?

*Raphael.*

The rest may keep the glory.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Michael.*

Wilt thou share  
The love-feast of the saved in Heaven to-night  
With hidden traitorous thoughts clouding thy  
heart?

*Raphael.*

Never again ! Never again for me !  
Never again the lily souls that live  
Along the margent of the streams, shall grow  
More candid at my coming. Never more  
God's birds above the bearers of the Ark  
Shall make a wood of implicated wings,  
Swept by the wind of slow ecstatic song.  
Thy youths shall hold their summer cenacles ;  
I am not of their fellowship, it seems.  
God's ancient peace shall feed them, as it feeds  
These yet uplifted hills. I would I knew  
Where bubbled that insistent spring. To drink  
Deep, and forget what I have seen to-day !

*Michael.*

What thou hast seen ? The splendor of his  
power  
Sent forth against the wicked ; his right arm  
Cleaving unbearable glories, lifted high  
To hurl his chivalry down slopes of flame

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

With wheels and tramlings; the wide thresh-  
ing-floor

Become a furnace; drop by anguished drop  
The oozing of the wine-press of his wrath;  
The gross pulp cumbering the floor of the world,  
The little priceless liquor chaliced up,  
Borne back 'mid plaining silver and sweet throats  
For the Spirit's earliest house-gift to the Bride!  
Thou would'st forget this gladly, Raphael?

*Raphael.*

Yes, yes; right gladly.

*Michael.*

Yonder where the fight  
Flung its main sea of blood and broken souls  
Into the nether dark, I saw a youth  
Cling for a moment to a jutting rock  
And gaze back at the angel shapes that rode  
The neck of the avalanche; between the wings  
Of the pale horse and the red his vision pierced,  
Between the ranks of spectral charioteers,  
Supernal arms and banners prone for speed,  
Up to the central menace of the Hand  
That launched that bulk of ruin; and I saw  
A light of mighty pleasure fill his eyes  
At all that harness and despatch of war

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Storming aslope. He laughed defiance back  
Ere down cascades of blood and fire was flung  
His body indistinguishably damned.  
How should this puny valor rise in glee  
To greet the power that crushed it, and thy heart,  
Angelically dowered, stand listless by?

*Raphael.*

Perhaps for thinking on another sight.  
After thy chivalry passed down and left  
The valley-trough cumbered and heaped with  
death,  
A broken girl o'er-lived to find the breast  
Her arms had clung to in the awful fall  
Strange, alien, not her lover's boyish shape  
She deemed she held, but gross with years and  
sins.

Her changed eyes heavily a moment roamed,  
Then settled back on his, the darkened mate  
Whom chance had flung her at the hour extreme  
In scornful bridals. From his brow she drew  
The war-worn locks, and laid her kisses there  
Unutterable with life's extreme tenderness.

. . . . .

Hark ! where the last of those redeemed go by,  
Companioned of the hasting paranympths  
Who hear afar the Spirit and the Bride

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Say "Come," and see the nuptial torch alight  
Ere they have put their saffron vesture on,—  
Too eager for their goal to join the song  
Those throats redeemèd raise, save that their  
    hearts

Throb rhythmic with it, systole dim  
And bright diastole, with wax and wane  
Of spirit-splendor pulsing to the tune.

*Redeemed Spirits* (sing, as they fly past below).

In the wilds of life astray,  
Held far from our delight,  
Following the cloud by day  
And the fire by night,  
Came we a desert way.  
O Lord, with apples feed us,  
With flagons stay !  
By Thy still waters lead us !

As bird torn from the breast  
Of mother-cherishings,  
Far from the swaying nest  
Dies for the mother wings,  
So did the birth-hour wrest  
From Thy sweet will and word  
Our souls distressed.  
Open Thy breast, thou Bird !



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Raphael.*

Another neareth, chill upon the wind ;  
Wan fire-flakes stain the clustering spires of cliff,  
From ledge to shoulder hapless echo clings  
And falters up.

*Michael.*

The pale one's homing-song !  
To-day he makes good harvest, and his voice  
Has autumn meanings ; jealously and late  
His steed foregoes the trampled threshing-stead.

*Raphael.*

Terrible angel ! Never until now  
Have I beheld his features through the veil  
Of pallor that enwrapped them ; now at last  
Their terror is distinct, for triumph now  
And large appeasement lights them visibly,  
As o'er his horse's neck he strains for speed.

*Michael.*

One flieth with him, rosy-lit within.

*Raphael.*

Not as the battailous breathing of thy mates  
Enrubies them : more vesperine and sad.  
'Twill be the lordly light of Uriel, dimmed.  
Hail, Uriel ! Quench thy speed.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*The Angel of the Pale Horse* (flying).

Why tarry now?

God's acts are throughly accomplished: Heaven  
stays

Till all her sons be gathered.

(*Flies past.*)

*Uriel* (alighting).

Here I wait

To see the swift reprisals Man shall take.

*Michael.*

Blaspheme not, lest I hurl thee down to swell  
The carrion sin that Raphael mourns above!

*Raphael.*

Uriel's place is there, by those pale heads,  
Those sightless eyes with awful question changed,  
Those desperate broken hands cheated in death  
With poor embraces chance and alien.

Not Uriel's only,—mine, and thine, and theirs  
Thy warrior mates, and chiefly His whose breast  
Bathed in some dawn's bright urge and wistful-  
ness

Put out this lovely fruitage, this sweet vine  
Of man the leaf and maid the honeyed flower  
In mystic alternation, and when noon  
Spread clamor in the pulses of the vine,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Was pined and plucked it up ! Not so shall one  
Deal with another's, much less with his own.

*Michael.*

For sins not to be borne he cut them off.  
Murders, adulteries, and acts unclean,  
Idolatries, and broken covenants,  
Violent hearts and unconsidering tongues.

*Uriel.*

The violence and the unclean acts were his ;  
Unto Himself himself brake covenant ;  
Before the monstrous fancies of his heart  
His heart made heathen mummary and song.  
Wherefore to-day himself He punishes.

*Michael.*

Thy mouth uttereth darkness. Is all dream ?  
Human and heavenly deed unmeaning both ?

*Raphael (to Uriel).*

Brother, thou art all wisdom, as I know  
And still have proved rejoicingly, but now  
Thy word indeed is difficult and dark.  
Take not away Man's ancient dignity,  
The privilege and power to elect his ways,  
His kingly self-possession. Level not

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

The head that lies too low to-day. Snatch not  
From brows abased the crown of personal will  
Which made them noble, though it brought  
    them down,  
Being worn too carelessly, too like a wreath  
Of ivy or poppies meant for holiday.  
Man's agonies and ecstasies obscure  
Were more than shadow-show ! Not all in vain  
His groping toward some quaint imagined good,  
His blood shed for a scruple, his low days  
Winged and illumined with long-suffering love !

*Uriel.*

Nay, not in vain were these, though otherwise  
Bound with the sum of things than unto Man  
Seemed likely, wearing that glad wreath he wore,  
And going after good the headstrong way.

*Raphael.*

We wait to hear this riddling talk made plain.

*Uriel.*

Truth is not soon made plain, nor in a breath  
Fluently solved while the chance listener waits,  
Nor by the elemental wrestling mind  
Wrung from the rock with sobs. Myself have  
    held,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Where in the sun's core light and thought are  
one,  
Æons of question, and am darkling still.

*Raphael.*

Speak, brother, though thy words be hard and  
scant.  
The candle flame goes far a moonless night.

*Uriel.*

The worlds and all their tenantry are Him,  
Even to the utmost archipelagoes  
Gazed at by maritime angels ere they veer  
Homeward, awestruck by omens and sea-signs  
Known to no pilot of them, and far-off  
Watch the scared islanders beside the straits,—  
All these, and whatso lies beyond our hail,  
Are effluence of the life that moves in Him,  
Thought of his brain, wish of his working  
blood :

Yet every separate creature of his thought  
Hath separate claims and separate potencies.  
Oh, not a sparrow falleth to the ground  
But He regardeth it ! Since ere it fell  
A little gladness died away in Him.  
And not a creature sinneth but He weeps  
His own sin with his creature's — fourfold pain,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Since god and creature, false each to itself,  
Was false each to the other. Not a heart  
O'ercometh evil and mounts up to good,  
But He o'ercometh and is lifted too.  
Each life of clay that flowered in fragrant deed,  
Each grass-blade that grew willingly, each bird  
That through the churlish weather hoarded song,  
Not only worked its own salvation out  
But helped Him in his old struggle with him-  
self—  
Or might have helped — or might have helped,  
it seems. . . .

*Raphael.*

Yet did not, thy disconsolate ending says.

*Uriel.*

Who shall dispute finalities with Him?  
Not Uriel. But as far as Uriel sees,  
Salvation lies annulled in yonder Vale  
And prone are God's true helpers.

*Michael.*

Clay of clay !

Wassailers, fleshlings, quarrel-mongers, thieves  
Of pleasure, plighters of unholy troth,  
Mimes, gypsies, idol-breakers, idol-smiths,  
Dervishing fantasists — most likely help !

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Uriel.*

Unlikely : yet the marrow of his bones ;  
Heat of the breath of his mouth ; corpuscles red  
Energie in his veins, loud gainsayers  
Of death's insinuating whisper, "Peace !" . . .  
Before the Heavens were spread, or He himself  
Rose from his changeless and unpictured dream,  
These stirred in Him, demanding to be dowered  
With individual shape and destiny,—  
Each one a soul, yet each incorporate  
With his great soul, which to far happy ends  
Should henceforth in a million shapes of will  
Immensely groan and travail, not with tears  
Alone, but laughter, with singing as with sobs.  
Oh, many a golden station on that march  
Lie backward of us ! when the armed worlds  
Broke leaguer round some conquered capital,  
And in the pleasure-places of its kings  
Sat down to feast, the unhelmed gleemen  
    chanting  
Victory past and victory to come.  
Let me not darken thought with imagery !  
Still the naked word escapes me, being too vast,  
Too simple, for our little pictured speech.  
This chiefly I would say : the restless joy  
Which called God from his sleep and bade his  
    hand

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Depict much life and language on the dark,  
Had other aims and meanings than are writ  
In yonder Valley for an epilogue.  
Man's violence was earnest of his strength,  
His sin a heady overflow, dynamic  
Unto all lovely uses, to be curbed  
And sweetened, never broken with the rod!

*Raphael.*

Why did He quench their passion? I have  
walked  
The rings of planets where strange-coloured  
moons  
Hung thick as dew, in ocean orchards feared  
The glaucous tremble of the living boughs  
Whose fruit hath eyes and purpose; but no-  
where  
Found any law but this : Passion is power,  
And, kindly tempered, saves. All things declare  
Struggle hath deeper peace than sleep can bring :  
The restlessness that put creation forth  
Impure and violent, held holier calm  
Than that Nirvana whence it wakened Him.

*Uriel.*

This day declares He deemeth otherwise.  
The Shining Wrestler, tired of strife, hath slain



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

The dark antagonist whose enmity  
Gave Him rejoicing sinews ; but of Him  
His foe was flesh of flesh and bone of bone ;  
With suicidal hand He smote him down :  
Soon we shall feel His lethal pangs begin.

*Raphael.*

Fiercer than those that clove thy burning realms  
And sent grey winds to waste the plains of  
Heaven  
When on the Cross He sought to purchase peace  
And lure his wayward world back to His hand !

*Michael.*

His lightning dry thy tongue ! Why should our  
minds  
Peer and conjecture of the danger past ?  
Thou knowest what glory followed.

*Raphael.*

Yes, I know.

The clouds at last rolled burning from the Throne  
And let us see the risen wonders there.  
Again I hear the gathering psalmody  
Chant out the clement tale — eternal God  
Made clay, by hands of clay unto the Cross  
Hung for a sign, that who beholding Him  
Should find Him very God, might dwell with us

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

In endless light and life. Again I hear  
The deep consenting chorus mount and merge  
The wayward crests of treble into one ;  
But still between the calling deeps of song  
Vague and unacquiescent hung my heart,  
Conning the burden wistfully anew  
In hopes to find the joy my comrades found  
Hid in the dubious notes. Vague hung my heart,  
Wistful as morning boughs that watch the moon,  
Not strong as now when I have seen all clear  
And o'er the ashes of the world declare.—  
Listen ! Are there not voices in the Vale ?

*Michael.*

They talk together. Some die not till dark.

*Raphael.*

Aye, until dark ! 'Twill be a starless night.

## ACT IV.

---

*Time : evening of the Day of Judgment*

---



## ACT IV.

*A rock in the Valley of the Judgment ; about the rock, and filling the whole trough of the valley, lie the bodies of the lost. Twilight.*

---

*Raphael.*

My lot is cast with these : I watch to-night  
Here islanded in death. Say me not nay :  
Till from the last lip anguish is unwreathed,  
From the last brow the frown of horror fades,  
Here I must sit, witness and comforter  
If any more conspicuous strengths survive  
To mutter or make signal in the dusk.

*Michael.*

Nay, brother, stay not. Though thy words are  
calm,  
Thy desperate eyes betray thee ; thou resolvest  
Some sudden irremediable thing.  
The past is done, and, whether well or ill,  
Necessitously. Put on that robe of song  
Woven of youngest light and over-runed  
With flickerings of the golden elder speech,  
Wherein thou led'st the lily souls along  
Choregic o'er the unclouded psalmody  
And wert so starry long ago ! Arise !

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

My soul is heavy at thee. Thou art wan ;  
Thine eyes are dull yet wild, even as these  
Who lie involved and heaped along the Vale  
Seeming in death to threaten and to rave.  
Arise and come away ! Why tarry here  
To mourn above these outcast, since the fan  
Hath winnowed them and left no righteous one ?  
Rather arise, make glad thy countenance,  
And through the courts of day let herald throats  
Softly declare thy coming, virgin hands,  
From that oraculous tree whose leaves are  
tongues,  
Laurel thee best of Heaven's lutanists  
And seat thee at the minstrel-hand of God.

*Raphael.*

You urge me well. I think my songs to-night  
Would cheer their festivals : I have a theme  
Of very present gladness, deeply conned.  
But if amid the gratulating chant,  
If through the dances orb'd and interorb'd  
Furnished with solemn symbol and device,  
Perchance there stole a quite unfurnished shape  
Nakedly risen from this company ?  
Holding up horrible accusing hands  
Against the nuptial light ? That were scarce  
well.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

I fear my lute would glance and jangle off  
To themes as good unsung. Hark !

*Michael.*

'Twas a voice,

Not distant.

*Raphael.*

Nay, 'tis yonder,— he who lies  
Half-lifted from the jetsam of this sea  
Across that ragged reef. Another, hush !  
A woman's voice, was't not ? And see, below —  
That aged throat would fain articulate. . . .  
They taste sweet speech ere the long silence  
comes.

*A Youth's Voice.*

Do any live but me ? Do any wake to hear  
A word spoke in the dark before I die ?

*An Old Man.*

An old and wakeful spirit rests thee near.

*A Young Woman.*

Long had I lain asleep, but wakened at thy cry.

*Youth.*

Not all discourteous is the Conqueror's heart,  
Since now of that good strength I wore at noon  
Ebbs back a little part.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

### *Old Man.*

Enough to syllable thy soul's young scorn,  
Though all unripe, unwise ;  
And haply rouse some one of these that lie  
Fixing the dark with undivining eyes  
Of human wit and seemliness forlorn,  
To speak their separate word or unto thine reply.

### *Youth.*

A song of scorn I minded to have sung,  
But all the words are faded from my tongue.  
Mysteriously withdrawn,  
Out of this desolation I am gone  
Aloft into the light of other days.  
My heart runs naked in the wind, more fleet  
Than are my flying feet,  
Above the misty foss and up the mountain lawn  
To seek the place of Morning where she stays.  
The silver summits held across the dawn  
By some gigantic arm, like wrought candelabras,  
Kindle their wicks of praise  
To light the temple builded not with hands  
Above the prostrate lands,  
And the religious winds, song-stoled,  
Pacing the mighty nave  
Fill azure dome and star-held architrave  
With hymns unto the gods that grow not old,—



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Lords of the joy of life made known  
Not unto gods alone,  
But perfectly to man and beast and stone,  
And by the atomies with rapture shared,  
But ne'er by poet's golden mouth  
Nor by the west wind singing to the south  
Fitly declared.

Oh, for a voice  
Here in the doors of death  
To speak the praise of life, existence mere,  
The simple come and go of natural breath,  
And habitation of the body's house with its five  
    windows clear !  
O souls defeated, broken, and undone,  
Rejoice with me, rejoice  
That we have walked beneath the moon and  
    sun  
Not churlishly, nor slanderous of the bliss ;  
But rather leaving this  
To the many prophets strict and sedulous  
Of that sad-spoken god  
Who now hath conquered and is surely king,  
Have given our lips for life to closely kiss,  
Have heard the sweet persuasion of the sod  
And been heart-credulous  
To trust the signs and whispers of the spring.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

### *Second Youth.*

Various the reasons why we could not pay  
The price exacted from us !  
My ear, though fain, I might have turned away  
From spring's love-startled promise,  
I might have given up the glorious sea  
And the majestic mountains might for me  
Have ceased to be ;  
God, with one sudden rinsing of his hand,  
Might have wiped bare  
The earth-ball of its deeds and pageantries,  
Yea, even of light and air,  
That on the stark circumference I might stand  
And choose deliberately, unvexed of these,  
Between my will and his.  
Then I had said, with cheerful voice and  
strong,  
Somewhat dismayed, yet with a cheerful voice,  
"This many days, Lord, I have thought it  
long  
Till I could put away creation's noise,  
The tragic streets, the poignant drip of rains,  
But chiefly the loud speaking in my veins  
Concerning this and that desirable.  
Now you have put me in a quiet place,  
Take but away your too expectant face,  
And all shall then be well.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Then I can ponder, as I meant to do  
And as I singly long since thought was mine,  
The mysteries divine ;  
Make quiet proof of you  
If you be verily my lord or no,  
And, having found you to be truly so,  
Shall understand for sooth,  
That down the eternities I may launch my  
mind  
Not as a tame hawk haggard down the wind,  
Whom huntsman's cry pursueth,  
But as an eagle without bell or jess,  
Obedient alone to his soul's lordliness.

### *Third Youth.*

Better with captives in the slaver's pen  
Hear women sob, and sit with cursing men,  
Yea, better here among these writhen lips,  
Than pluck out from the blood its old compan-  
ionships.  
If God had set me for one hour alone,  
Apart from clash of sword  
And trumpet-pealèd word,  
I think I should have fled unto his throne.  
But always ere the dayspring took the sky,  
Somewhere the silver trumpets were acry,—  
Sweet, high, oh, high and sweet !

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

What voice could summon so but the soul's  
Paraclete?

Whom should such voices call but me, to dare  
and die?

O ye asleep here in the eyrie town,  
Ye mothers, babes, and maids, and aged men,  
The plain is full of foemen ! Turn again —  
Sleep sound, or waken half  
Only to hear our happy bugles laugh  
Lovely defiance down,  
As through the steep  
Grey streets we sweep,  
Each horse and man a ribbèd fan to scatter all  
that chaff !

How from the lance-shock and the griding  
sword

Untwine the still small accents of the Lord ?

How hear the Prince of Peace and Lord of  
Hosts

Speak from the zenith 'mid his marshalled  
ghosts,

“Vengeance is mine, I will repay ;

Cease thou and come away !”

Or having seen and harkened, how refrain

From crying, heart and brain,

“So, Lord, Thou sayest it, Thine —

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

But also mine, ah surely also mine !  
Else why and for what good  
This strength of arm my father got for me  
By perfect chastity,  
This glorious anger poured into my blood  
Out of my mother's depths of ardency ?

### *A Confused Voice.*

Not very long to-day  
Thy arm held back the mischief of the tide !  
Thou could'st not check the play  
Of scythes, the awful chariots beside !  
Thy blood has ebbed a little from its pride.

### *A Girl's Voice.*

I waited patiently and thought to hear  
The secret reason dark,  
The secret reason dark and dear  
Why none of us had heart to mark  
The pale evangel whispering from the sphere.  
For oft the moon between the garden boughs  
Her looks of summer longing would efface,  
And come to be a halo round the brows  
Of Him who died to give the sinner grace,  
Now saddening o'er His purchase from that  
place.  
And oft at dawn I heard the Sons of Morning

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Silvered with lovely menace fill the sky,  
And heard their solemn lips deliver warning  
What time the central singer lifted high,  
In the deep hush twixt ode and palinode,  
The sangrael of the sun, brimmed with redeem-  
ing blood.

But how might I attend the minatory  
Voices of many angels breathing doom,  
When from the window of the little room  
My love's face had not faded, and the story  
His wakeful mouth had whispered in the gloom  
Spake in my pulses yet? And how at evening  
turn

To feel those sad eyes down the moonlight yearn,  
When mouth to mouth and breast to aching  
breast

I held my lover close, and by his nest  
The nightingale, scarce master of his mood,  
Now after faint essay  
And amorous dim delay  
Suddenly steeped his heart in song's mad pleni-  
tude?

### *A Woman's Voice.*

What unripe girl is this who maketh bold  
To speak for lovers at the extreme hour,  
Yet fancy-paints the flower?  
Yet hides with image-gilt the naked gold?

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

O sisters, brothers, help me to arise !  
Of God's two-hornèd throne I will lay hold  
And let Him see my eyes ;  
That He may understand what love can be,  
And raise his curse, and set his children free.

### *Another Woman's Voice.*

My life was a rank venomèd weed  
And hers, I think, a flower ;  
But my harsh voice shall have a power  
Fiercer than hers to plead.  
About His knees with curses I will cling,  
My veins I will break open, till He see  
The barb of the intolerable sting,  
The tongues of the immitigable fire  
He planted there to fret and fumble through me,  
To craze and to undo me,  
Till on the cruel altars where He threw me  
I slew my heart's desire !

### *Old Man.*

Of double fetters be not fain, my child,  
To these thou wearest be thou reconciled.  
Spread not before his dark averted gaze  
(Now that He holds his hand and seemeth satisfied)  
The love that called you unappointed ways

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

And filled your hearts with pride.  
A little while He left you free  
In passion's privilege  
To god it on the peaks of personality,  
But ye have walked too near the hither edge.

Yet once I thought —  
My old heart meekened to an evening mood  
By dint of years and much beatitude —  
He was not jealous as the prophet taught,  
Nor loving-tolerant as mild teachers held,  
But swayed to mystical participation  
Of various delight  
By every chrysalid's meandering flight  
And million-footed onset of heroic nation ;  
To instant joy impelled  
By every jet of life that from Time's fountain  
    quelled.  
So deemed I, musing on the headstrong glee  
Of children at my knee,  
But He ordained his ways after another fashion.

### *Fourth Youth.*

'Twas not the lover nor the warrior stirred  
His jealous arm to smite,  
Nor he who longed to launch forth as a bird  
In far and lonely flight



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

To seek the truth of things, nor he who heard  
The choral winds in Nature's temple chaunting.  
All these He could endure,  
Since his creation and its furniture  
They merely used, nor vexed his ears with  
    vaunting  
Themselves creators too  
And fashioners of worlds, and pilots of them  
    flaunting  
Beside his in the blue.  
But some there were infatuate, audacious,  
To whom the world's vast girth  
Seemed niggard and unspacious ;  
Who, having clambered or been borne on wings  
Above the realms of sense  
From off God's secret altars ravished thence  
The plastic fire of his imaginings  
And brought it down to earth.

Then, pale with supernatural intention,  
We builders of the over-world arose,  
And softly to their houses of ascension,  
Orbing as soft as April buds uncloze,  
But bowelled of the furious lava-stream,  
Star after ordered star went up the heavens of  
    dream :  
Each from the other ever differing,

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Glory from glory,  
And each a world summed and replete  
With all the human heart forebodeth well  
Or hoardeth to repeat  
Of tragical and sweet  
In earthly summer and the mortal spring  
And man's peculiar story,  
Yet by the mind made an immortal thing,  
Patiently purged and weaned of its corruptible.

Oh, how should Man into the dust be trod,  
Who is himself a god?  
How should the lord of each enchanted isle  
For gazing on a brother-god's high sacrificial  
sorrow  
Say himself low and vile,  
Or for that Sufferer's sake  
Teen to his own undarkened being borrow,  
And in a gloom of abnegation break  
The wand wherewith he summoned from their  
sleep  
The whirlwinds of the everlasting deep,  
And souls of men and spirits of lost hours  
And spring's sequestered firstlings, the sky  
flowers,  
Bound to his golden powers?

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Michael.*

I wait no longer on their stammering tongues !  
Once more I pray thee rise and come away.  
The Valley darkens fast, and Heaven stays  
Thy single voice to make its concord full.

*Raphael.*

These voices we have hearkened lack as well,  
To make such concord as I care to hear.

*Michael.*

Then curse thee for a stubborn heart !— Nay,  
    nay,  
I will not curse thee whom I love. . . . Take  
    heed  
Lest any wing patrolling in the dark,  
Mistaking thee for one of these, should smite.

*Raphael.*

Already from the deeps approacheth one,  
Staining the limbs and faces of the dead  
With amber as he flies. What clime has blown  
Azazel's radiance to so blear a tinct ?

*Azazel (flying past).*

*Woe ! Woe ! unto the dwellers in this Vale.  
Woe unto them who wait the second death !  
Prepare to meet the Worm that dieth not !*

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Raphael.*

Azaziel, hear ! What meaneth . . . ?

*Michael.*

He is past,  
Bearing his message further. How it sobs  
And falters on the wind !

*Raphael.*

In the deeps begins  
A myriad lamentation. . . .

*Michael.*

Nearer now,  
And mixed with keener individual cry. . . .

*Raphael.*

The sea of death sways moaning and recoils,  
Bristling with serried surf of forms uplift,  
Postures of supplication and despair,  
Forlorn attitudes !

*Michael.*

From the starless sky  
A star shoots screaming, hushes in mid-flight,  
And stands at gaze above the vasty caves,  
The cañons and the aged wells of dark  
Toward which this valley plunges.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Raphael.*

Far below

Disastrous splendor glares above the abyss,  
And in the midst a bulk of sinuous shade  
That lifts and swings a snaky head aloft  
Surveying where to strike. . . .

*Michael.*

Away ! Away !

Even now his pendulous neck doth sweep the  
Vale

From wall to wall, incredibly advanced  
Leagues hither, though his lewder folds are still  
Hid backward in the abyss. Away ! Away !  
From yonder peak we may behold all safe :  
To linger here even spirits dare not.

*Raphael.*

Go ;

I tarry. Let me take thy mighty sword.  
A minstrel's hand can swing a blade at need.

*Michael.*

Not so. Forgive me this my violence !  
Thy soul is all distraught and desperate,  
And I must save thee in thine own despite.

*(He overpowers Raphael, and bears him aloft just  
as the enormous swinging head of the Serpent  
blots out the scene.)*



## A C T V.

---

*Time : as in Act IV.*

---





ACT V. SCENE I.

*An exposed upland : one side looks down into the Valley of the Judgment, on the others the snow-peaks fade into the visionary cliffs and slopes crowned by the battlements of Heaven. Sunset glow still lingers on the heights : the moon is rising.*

---

*Raphael* (awaking).

Where are we, brother ? I remember naught.

*Michael.*

Safe lifted o'er the Vale, and none too soon.

*Raphael.*

Help me to rise.

*Michael.*

Nay, rest thee yet a while.

*Raphael.*

Something of portent passes in the Vale —  
I cannot well recall, but know 'tis so  
By thy wild looking. Can thy vision pierce  
So downward through the mists ? Mine eyes are  
weak  
And blink at the mild moon.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Michael.*

Spare thou to look.  
Even me it grieveth, thee it will destroy  
With present heart-break.

*Raphael.*

O remembrance now  
Creeps moaning through the sea-halls of my  
mind,—  
A sluggish neap, with loss and wreckage strewn !

*Michael.*

The Serpent enters now that last defile  
High lifted toward the spiritual hills.  
Behind him as he came has silence fallen  
And gesture ceased : final ineloquence.  
These hither people are the lesser thewed  
But more inspirited, who held the fight  
Vanward against us, and who fell the first  
Before the whirlwind of our going down.

*Raphael.*

Is it too late to save this remnant few  
For seed of a new world, planted afar  
Beyond this trouble? Come, thy might and  
mine !  
He lifts a questioning head and seems to stand

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Hesitant at the mouth of the defile :  
There give him battle. . . .

*Michael.*

Nay.

*Raphael.*

Then I alone.

*Michael.*

Too late ; and even if sooner, much too late !  
He brings the second death ; his fangs have  
power,  
'Tis whispered, on the flaming seraphim  
To tarnish or to quench ; one venom fleck  
Flung from his jaws, how might it lame and  
scar  
Our substance archangelical.

*Raphael.*

Yes, yes,

You give me reasons to it. Lovelier  
Such scars upon the breast, though mortal proven,  
Than that fair sigil set upon thy brow  
The morn of thy first victory. Why live,  
Why live, when all these wills that searched the  
earth —  
Until they found their one and inward love,  
Refusing to be still — have ceased to search,  
Though quite unsatisfied ? To feel the night

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Unvexed of longing, and the day purged blank  
Of laughter and of sorrow and of brawl;  
No pride of life to glory in the sun,  
No ecstasy to mate the moon's increase,  
No heart interpreting the twilight thrush —  
All the heart's business done! Nay, not for  
me!

Mine ear hath lain too long on Nature's pulse,  
I cannot miss that music. Let me go.

*Michael* (still detaining him).

Govern thy heart and tongue. Nature, thou  
knowest,  
Was but a bye-thought of the Eternal Mind,  
A whim — extravagant, repented of,  
And now in its chief element of Man  
Annihilate and put away, save those  
Who rendered up their wills to His, and share  
This night with Him the immortal quietudes.

Lo, where the Serpent enters! Quick and dead  
Loosen their maimed embraces. From beneath  
Heaves the incumbent carnage. In the clefts  
And on the headlands scattered souls arise  
Expectant or imploring . . . Now he reigns  
Instant among them, and their sayings-nay  
Decrease and come to nothing.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Raphael.*

All is done :

The great refusal made. The wayward heats  
That might have moved God's blood to sweetest  
ends

In dreams and deed, have bled themselves away,  
And peace is his, though profitless.

*Michael.*

Hush ! Look !

The Worm goes on !

*Raphael.*

What say'st thou ? Speak !

Mine eyes are still too dim, I see not well  
What passes 'neath the drifting fogs.

*Michael.*

He mounts !

He lays his length upward the visioned hills,  
The inviolable fundamentals of Heaven !  
There where he climbs the kindled slopes grow  
pale,

Ashen the amethystine dells, and dim  
The starry reaches. . . . Now he coils his bulk  
About a foreland, and the nacrour light  
It beetled with turns cinder. High he piles  
His folds, and seems to note the upward way.  
Hark, the trump sings to battle ! I am called.

(*He flies upward toward the walls of Heaven.*)

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

*Raphael* (alone).

O darkest creature of God's shaping thought,  
Shamefullest born, in that unsacred hour  
When, pining for the pools of ancient sloth,  
His soul repenteth Him that he had made  
Man, and had put that passion out to use !  
Cleavest thou inward now to find the heart  
That bore thee shuddering and hath fostered  
thee

With secret sweat of agonizing brows ?  
Has this day's great defection armed thy fang  
And lit thy wrath to seek Him where He sits  
Sickening amid his harsh-established peace ?

On which side then shall Raphael be found,—  
The sociable spirit, very friend of man  
And Nature's old-time lover ? Surely there  
At God's right hand, with a loud song for sword  
To beat the Spectre back when armies fail,  
And cheer Him as the shepherd Israel's king.

*(He flies after Michael.)*

## ACT V. SCENE II.

*Raphael stands on a promontory of the cloudy slope up which the Serpent has passed. The Valley of the Judgment lies far below.*

---

*Raphael.*

A mortal weariness beats down my wing ;  
I cannot farther. Here I must remain,  
Whether I will or no a truant still,  
While battle rages round the heart of God,—  
A recreant on the very slopes where first  
With wistful feet from Heaven adventuring  
I sought those little flowers of shyest light  
Whose earthly hue and palpitance would speak  
A wild distress of sweetness, till my blood  
Sang wander-songs, and pictured to itself  
The happy outland chances of the spring.  
I think none grow now in the muted dells  
Nor on the chidden reaches ; yet — perhaps —  
If I should search as earnestly as once. . . .

My mind strays like a fevered child's to-night  
And plays with leaves and straws, regarding not  
How fate comes on next instant ! . . . Not alone,  
Not all companionless must I abide  
Its coming, love be praised who sends me love

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

And comradeship now at my dearest need !  
For hither through the wintry windelstrae  
Flee, veer, and flee a fluttered company  
With hands outstretched and groping. Woman-  
kind,  
By the lorn influence that companions them  
And hangs grief in the wind. . . . A taper's  
flame  
Streams backward o'er each trembling hand.  
'Twill be  
The seven dear sister spirits ancillary  
Who tend their lamps of laud before the Throne.

Stay, sisters, stay ! They swerve aside and flee  
More terror-stricken still. I prithee stay ;  
'Tis Raphael calls !

*First Lamp.*

O then art thou too fled ?  
Haste, let us flee together ! We had thought  
All but the timid spirits still abode  
The battle's outcome. Timid thou art not,  
Though woman-gentle ; is the battle lost ?  
Or won ? Oh, surely won, since thou art here.

*Raphael.*

I come from earthward. Mortal weariness



## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

Beat down my wing, and I was forced to stay.  
How goes the struggle ?

### *First Lamp.*

In and in it stormed  
From ring to lessening ring, until we fled,  
I and the sister Lamps, save only one,  
Our meekest and most patient flame of praise,  
Whom naught could make afraid. Now by the  
wind  
Distract, we wander on these withered hills.

### *Second Lamp.*

How withered from the day thou brought'st us  
hence  
Flowers for our lampads ! — tiny troublous things  
That living pierced us with a faint unrest  
And dying left a nameless woe behind.

### *Raphael.*

Call up each sweetness over-lived, for soon  
Sweet shall be sweet no more, nor sad be sad.  
Momently yonder Heaven's heart of light  
Throbs feebler, and the dark gains on the day.

Now where he runs afar, the sun hath felt  
Sharp pangs delay his feet, for swiftly hither

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

In the distressful beaming of the moon  
Comes on the wasted light of Uriel.

*Uriel* (approaching).

The dream is done ! Petal by petal falls  
The coronal of creatured bloom God wove  
To deck his brows at dawn.

*Raphael.*

No hope remains ?

*Uriel.*

To save Him from himself not cherubim  
Nor seraphim avail. Who loves not life  
Receiveth not life's gifts at any hand.

*Raphael.*

And life He loved not, though it sprang from  
Him ?

*Uriel.*

He loved it not entirely, good and ill.

*Raphael.*

For what end should we love an evil thing ?

*Uriel.*

Better than I thou knowest, truant soul !  
Who all the summer hours didst love to stoop  
O'er insect feuds, herb-whisperings, and watch

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

The prurient-fingered sap startle the trees  
To sudden laughter of bloom. Better than I  
Thou knowest what lewd rebellion stings the core  
Of nature, bidding every seed awake  
To sacramental life after its kind ;  
Better than I thou knowest what cruelties  
Rage round about each starry heroism,  
Out of what murky stuff the lover builds  
His soul's white habitation. 'Tis not mine  
To lesson thee how height and depth are bound  
So straitly that when evil dies, as soon  
Good languishes, nor how the flesh and soul  
Quicken with striving, and when strife is done  
Decline from what they were.

*Raphael.*

Would He had dared  
To nerve each member of his mighty frame —  
Man, beast, and tree, and all the shapes of will  
That dream their darling ends in clod and star —  
To everlasting conflict, wringing peace  
From struggle, and from struggle peace again,  
Higher and sweeter and more passionate  
With every danger passed ! Would He had  
spared  
That dark Antagonist whose enmity  
Gave Him rejoicing sinews, for of Him

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

---

His foe was flesh of flesh and bone of bone,  
With suicidal hand He smote him down,  
And now indeed His lethal pangs begin.

*First Lamp* (to Uriel).

Brothier, what lies beyond this trouble? Death?

*Uriel.*

All live in Him, with Him shall all things die.

*Second Lamp.*

And the snake reign, coiled on the holy hill?

*Uriel.*

Sorrow dies with the heart it feeds upon.

*Raphael.*

Look, where the red volcano of the fight  
Hath burst, and down the violated hills  
Pours ruin and repulse, a thousand streams  
Choked with the pomp and furniture of Heaven.  
In vain the Lion ramps against the tide,  
In vain from slope to slope the giant Wraths  
Rally but to be broken. Dwindling dim  
Across the blackened pampas of the wind  
The routed Horses flee with hoof and wing,  
Till their trine light is one, and now is quenched.

## THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

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*Uriel.*

The spirits fugitive from Heaven's brink  
Put off their substance of ethereal fire  
And mourn phantasmal on the phantom alps.

*Fourth Lamp.*

Mourn, sisters ! For our light is fading too.  
Thou of the topaz heart, thou of the jade,  
And thou sweet trembling opal — ye are grown  
Grey things, and aged as God's sorrowing eyes.

*First Lamp.*

My wick burns blue and dim.

*Second Lamp.*

My oil is spent.

*Raphael.*

The moon smoulders ; and naked from their seats  
The stars arise with lifted hands, and wait.



















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